CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method in a computing system for providing a user interaction scheme comprising:

minimizing an application upon receiving a minimize command;

revealing a tile to represent the minimized application; and

providing access to selected application features through the tile.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the selected application features include a sub-set of the original application features.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the selected application features include all of the original application features.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing access to additional features not available in the application.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising hiding an application window upon receiving the minimize command.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising hiding the taskbar application button upon receiving the minimize command.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising hiding an alt-tab entry associated with the application upon receiving the minimize command.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising revealing the tile in a sidebar.

9. The method of claim 2, further comprising providing access to the sub-set of application features through a fly-out menu accessible through the tile.

10. The method of claim 2, further comprising providing the user with a restore button accessible through the tile to allow the user to maximize the application.

11. The method of claim 2, further comprising providing an available features selection module for allowing the application to select features available through the tile.

12. The method of claim 2, further comprising allowing the user to determine a size of the tile.

13. A computer readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing the method of claim 1.

14. A method in a computing system for providing a user interaction scheme through the use of a sidebar, comprising:

moving an application to the sidebar upon receipt of a user command to minimize the application; and

providing access to at least a sub-set of features belonging to the application from the minimized application in the sidebar.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising providing access to additional features not available in the application.

16. The method of claim 14, further comprising inserting a tile in the sidebar for providing access to the application.

17. The method of claim 14, further comprising hiding an application window upon receiving the minimize command.

18. The method of claim 14, further comprising hiding a taskbar application button upon receiving the minimize command.

19.   The method of claim 14, further comprising hiding an alt-tab entry associated with the application upon receiving the minimize command.

20.   The method of claim 16, further comprising providing access to the sub-set of application features through a fly-out menu accessible through the tile.

21.   The method of claim 16, further comprising providing the user with a restore button accessible through the tile to allow the user to maximize the application.

22.   The method of claim 16, further comprising providing an available features selection module for allowing the application to select features available through the tile.

23.   The method of claim 16, further comprising allowing the user to determine a size of the tile.

24.   A computer readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing the method of claim 12.

25.   A system for providing user access to a variety of informational items, the system comprising:

a sidebar for hosting a plurality of tiles;

at least one application including an insertion module for inserting a tile into the sidebar, wherein selected features of the application remain available through the tile when the application is represented by a tile in the sidebar; and

user interface tools for allowing a user to command placement of a selected application into the sidebar.

26.   The system of claim 25, further comprising a restoration module for restoring the application through the use of the tile.

27.   The system of claim 25, further comprising an available features selection module for selecting application features available through the tile.

28.   The system of claim 25, further comprising special controls for allowing removal of the application from the sidebar.

29.   The system of claim 25, further comprising sidebar controls for hiding a taskbar application button, an alt-tab entry, and an application window upon receiving the minimize command.

30.   The system of claim 25, further comprising a fly-out menu for providing access to the sub-set of application features accessible through the tile.

31.   A system for providing access to a minimized application through a user interface, the system comprising:

an available feature selection module for allowing an application to provide selected features including at least a sub-set of a full feature set upon minimization; and

a tile insertion module for revealing a tile and for providing access to the selected features.

32.   The system of claim 31, a sidebar for hosting the tile within the user interface.

33.   The system of claim 31, further comprising a restoration module for restoring the application through the use of the tile.

34.   The system of claim 31, further comprising special controls for allowing removal of the application from the sidebar.

35.   The system of claim 31, further comprising sidebar controls for hiding a taskbar application button, an alt-tab entry, and an application window upon receiving the minimize command.

36.   The system of claim 31, further comprising a fly-out menu for providing access to the sub-set of application features accessible through the tile.